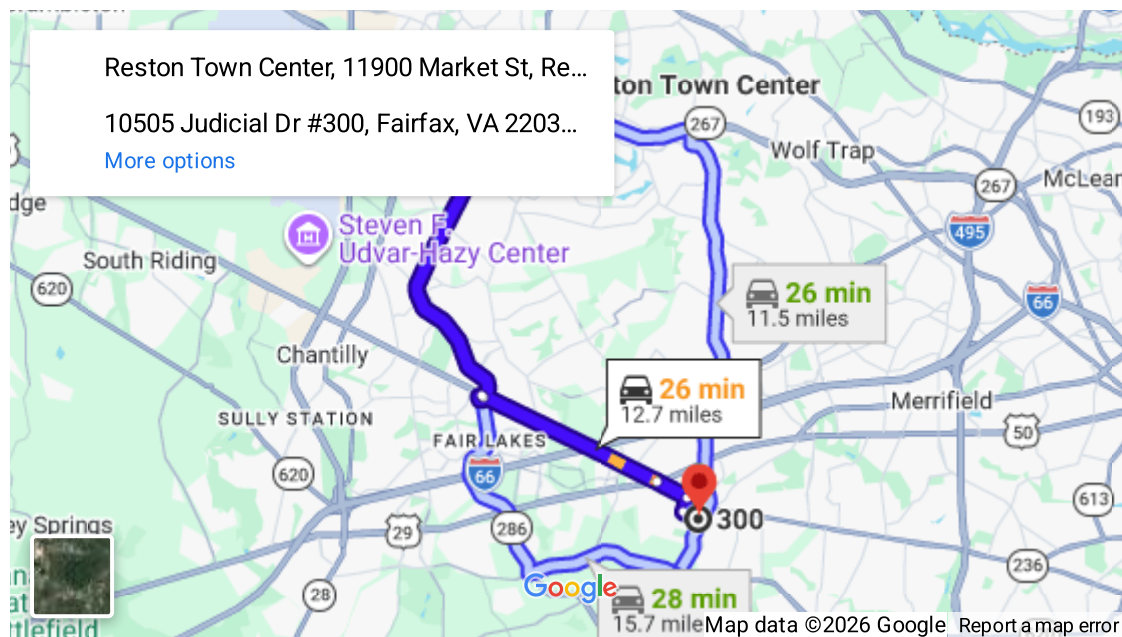


Virginia Child Custody Best Interests Standard Fairfax The Irving Law Firm Child custody decisions in Virginia are made under the best interests of the child standard, a legal framework that directs courts to weigh a specific set of statutory factors **Criminal defense attorney** to determine the custody and visitation arrangement that will best serve the child's welfare. Virginia Code section 20-124.3 lists the factors courts must consider, and understanding what these factors require is essential for any parent preparing for a custody proceeding in Fairfax County. The Irving Law Firm helps parents understand how the best interests analysis applies to their specific family circumstances. The statutory factors include considerations such as the age and physical and mental condition of each parent and child, the parent who has been the primary caregiver for the child, each parent's ability to support the child's relationship with the other parent, the parent's involvement in the child's life and activities, any history of family abuse, and the child's preference when the child is of reasonable age and intelligence to form a preference. No single factor is determinative, and the court is required to weigh all of them. Physical and legal custody are separate concepts in Virginia. Legal custody refers to decision-making authority for major aspects of the child's life such as education, medical care, and religious upbringing; physical custody refers to where the child lives and with which parent. Joint legal custody with shared decision-making authority is common in Virginia when parents can communicate and cooperate; physical custody arrangements range from primary with one parent to approximately equal time sharing between both.

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The Irving Law Firm helps parents develop parenting plan proposals that reflect the statutory best interests factors, prepare for mediation or evidentiary hearings on custody, and respond to custody modification requests when circumstances change after the initial order is entered. For child custody guidance in Fairfax, call The Irving Law Firm - Fairfax Divorce Lawyers at (571) 474-1990. Located at 10505 Judicial Drive, Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22030.

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